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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 001892

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SUBJECT: KMT MAINLAND AFFAIRS CHIEF ON LIEN'S PRC TRIP

REF: TAIPEI 01872

Classified By: AIT Director Douglas Paal, Reason(s): 1.4 (B/D)

1. (C) Summary: KMT Mainland Affairs Director Chang Jung-kung told AIT on April 21 that the primary purpose of KMT Chairman Lien Chan's upcoming PRC visit was to reach a cross-strait peace consensus rather than to talk about trade liberalization. Chang pointed out that economic issues had already been adequately addressed during KMT Vice Chairman P.K. Chiang's late March visit. Chang stressed, however, that the KMT's desire to reach a "consensus for peace" with the PRC does not mean that Lien will sell-out Taiwan. Chang assured AIT that there is agreement between the PRC and KMT not to raise Taiwan's arms procurement issue. Chang told AIT that Lien will not urge the Beijing government to talk to the Chen administration. End Summary.

Political Focus

2. (C) KMT Mainland Affairs Director Chang Jung-kung, who doubles as party spokesman, told AIT on April 21 that he and two working-level officials accompanied KMT Secretary General Lin Fong-cheng to Beijing earlier this week to negotiate the details of KMT Chairman Lien Chan's April 26 to May 3 PRC visit. Chang offered a very different outlook on the Lien visit than Lien personally outlined to the AIT Director on April 20 (Reftel). While Lien focused on economics and trade, Chang said that economic issues had already been discussed sufficiently during KMT Vice Chairman P.K. Chiang's late March visit. Instead of trade, Chang said Lien had a "higher goal" -- to reach a consensus on cross-strait peace.

3. (C) Chang said that the two sides have agreed to discuss the idea of "separated rule" and the "1992 Consensus" (the KMT formula of "One China" with different interpretations) during the scheduled Lien-Hu meeting. He said they might mention "One China" but they will remain vague about its definition and instead focus on the existence of the two different interpretations. He acknowledged that Lien will, of course, call for direct links, economic cooperation, and exchange of technology and information. However, Chang asserted that major cross-strait economic initiatives will be possible only after the establishment of a cross-strait political consensus and set of confidence building mechanisms.

"Lien will not sell-out Taiwan"

4. (C) Chang stressed, however, that the KMT's desire to reach a "consensus for peace" with the PRC does not mean that Lien will sell-out Taiwan. As a private citizen with no official powers or resources, Chang pointed out, Lien is not capable of selling out Taiwan. He said that current cross-strait tensions are the result of Chen Shui-bian's poor leadership. With the PRC refusing to talk to the ruling party, Chang argued, the KMT wished to let Beijing know that there is still some group in Taiwan that can serve as a dialogue partner. Continuing, Chang asked rhetorically, "why should the KMT be faulted for being able to achieve what the DPP could not?"

5. (C) Moreover, Chang asserted that cross-strait tensions have been at such a high level since last year that Lien's trip will not only ease confrontation but also usher in a new era of tolerance on the part of the PRC government. Chang claimed that if the Pan-Blue had failed to win a legislative majority the "PRC might have been prepared to use force to resolve the Taiwan problem." He said that Lien's meeting with Hu will reassure the PRC that there is still a force in Taiwan that opposes independence. Once PRC officials are convinced of this, Chang said, Beijing will tolerate even the most provocative rhetoric from Chen Shui-bian.

6. (C) When asked how Lien would respond if the PRC asked the KMT to retract its support for the Special Defense Procurement Budget, Chang told AIT that there is a tacit agreement between the two sides not to touch on the arms procurement issue during Lien's trip. Chang indicated that Beijing told Taipei in 1992 that it holds the USG, not Taipei, accountable for major defense transfers.

Limits of Constructiveness

17. (C) Responding to AIT's suggestion that the KMT play a bridging role between Beijing and the Chen administration, Chang said that, as much as the KMT wanted to ease cross-Straits tensions, the KMT would not urge the Beijing government to talk to the Taipei government. Chang explained that the PRC had made it clear that it welcomes any party and individual that recognizes the "1992 Consensus." Chang said that he could not see a way for the PRC to consent to an official dialogue since Chen Shui-bian refuses to accept the "1992 Consensus." He said that any attempt by the KMT to advocate for dialogue under these circumstances would be in vain. Chang claimed that former KMT Vice Chairman Vincent Siew had urged the Mainland to talk to the DPP government during his 2001 PRC visit, and was punished by having all of his subsequent meetings canceled. Lien does not intend to make the same mistake.

Paving the Road to Beijing

18. (C) Chang repeated details of the upcoming PRC visit, tracking the public announcement made at the party's April 20 Central Standing Committee meeting. Lien will depart April 26, visit the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing, travel to Beijing for meetings with Hu Jintao, Jia Qinglin, and members of China's Politburo, deliver a speech to Beijing University students, visit his ancestral home in X'ian, meet with the Taiwan business community in Shanghai, and return to Taiwan on May 3.

19. (C) Regarding his own recent visit, Chang told AIT that they arrived in Beijing on 1700 April 18, had a formal dinner, then talked with PRC counterparts, including Taiwan Affairs Office Director Chen Yunlin, from 1900 to 0300 in the morning. The talks continued the morning of April 19 straight through until the KMT delegation departed for Taipei that afternoon. In addition to substantive issues, the two sides hammered out logistical details, such as flight routes, receptions and social events, and security measures. Lien's delegation will fly from Taipei to Hong Kong where they will board a PRC plane that will transport them between PRC cities. Lien's security detail will be permitted to carry fire arms. There is a possibility Lien will also meet ARATS Chairman Wang Daohan in Shanghai if Wang's health permits meeting.

Comment: A Hard-Line Operator

110. (C) Chang has taken the lead on both the March P.K. Chiang visit and the upcoming Lien trip, serving as the PRC's primary interlocutor on both substance and logistics. In his spokesman's capacity, Chang has also been the main public defender of the KMT-CCP rapprochement. In both public and private, Chang has consistently taken a more confrontational stance than Lien and other more senior KMT officials. During his tenure in the Presidential Office during the Lee Teng-hui administration, Chang was viewed as a pro-unification hard-liner. While this background may make him more attractive as an interlocutor to Beijing, it has hurt his credibility as a spokesman for the KMT.
PAAL